

Industrial Sickness Absenteeism

By W. M. GAFAFER, D.Sc.

First Two Quarters, 1951

A seasonal trend is recognizable in industrial absenteeism for the first two quarters of 1951.

The over-all rate for the winter months (1951's first quarter) is 168.4 absences per 1,000 male workers, representing a 29-percent increase over the 1:50 rate of 130.4 for the same period. Contributing to the rise is a 47-percent increase in the rate for

the respiratory group, with influenza and grippe the leading cause.

In warmer weather, absentee rates drop. There is more similarity between 1951 and 1950 second-quarter rates. Of interest again are influenza and grippe with the 1951 second-quarter rate one-third less than the first quarter.

A review of the respiratory group of diseases by corresponding quarters for 10 years, 1942-51, shows the 1951 first-quarter rate 15 percent above its 10-year mean and the second-quarter rate 8 percent below its mean.

The tabular data below, on 8-day or longer disabilities, cover approximately 170,000 male workers in in-

Dr. Gafafer heads the statistical services for the Division of Occupational Health, Bureau of State Services, Public Health Service. He continues here the series of industrial morbidity reports begun by the Public Health Service in 1920. An index of the entire series and the 1950 report appeared in the weekly Public Health Reports, November 23, 1951.

dustry and are based on periodic reports from industrial sick benefit associations, company relief departments, and group health insurance plans.

Absences per 1,000 male employees by cause (annual basis)—sickness and nonindustrial injuries disabling for 8 consecutive days or longer—first and second quarters, 1951¹

Cause ²	Number of absences per 1,000 males beginning in specified period						
	Second quarter		First quarter		First half		
	1951	1950	1951	1950	1951	1950	1946-50
Sickness and nonindustrial injuries	118.2	125.7	168.4	130.4	143.0	128.0	119.0
Nonindustrial injuries (169-195)	14.3	15.4	15.5	11.4	14.9	13.3	12.1
Sickness	103.9	110.3	152.9	119.0	128.1	114.7	106.9
Respiratory diseases	33.6	36.2	78.4	53.2	55.8	44.8	42.4
Tuberculosis of respiratory system (13).....	.5	.7	.8	.5	.7	.6	.7
Influenza, grippe (33).....	12.2	12.0	39.7	20.5	25.8	16.3	16.8
Bronchitis, acute and chronic (106).....	4.4	6.2	10.1	8.4	7.2	7.3	6.4
Pneumonia, all forms (107-109).....	4.9	5.6	10.5	8.0	7.7	6.8	5.1
Diseases of pharynx and tonsils (115b, 115c).....	3.9	3.7	4.3	3.3	4.1	3.5	4.2
Other respiratory diseases (104, 105, 110-114).....	7.7	8.0	13.0	12.5	10.3	10.3	9.2
Digestive diseases	21.3	21.6	21.9	18.0	21.6	19.8	17.7
Diseases of stomach except cancer (117, 118).....	6.6	5.9	7.0	5.8	6.7	5.8	5.5
Diarrhea and enteritis (120).....	2.4	2.8	2.9	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.2
Appendicitis (121).....	4.6	4.3	4.6	3.2	4.6	3.8	3.6
Hernia (122a).....	3.3	3.8	3.0	2.6	3.2	3.2	2.8
Other digestive (115a, 115d, 116, 122b-129).....	4.4	4.8	4.4	3.7	4.4	4.3	3.6
Nonrespiratory-nondigestive diseases	45.7	48.3	49.4	44.3	47.5	46.3	43.2
Infectious and parasitic diseases (1-12, 14-24, 26-29, 31-32, 34-44) ³	3.4	3.3	5.3	3.8	4.4	3.6	3.2
Rheumatism, acute and chronic (58, 59).....	3.1	4.0	4.3	3.8	3.7	3.9	4.5
Neurasthenia and the like (part of 84d).....	1.8	1.9	1.3	1.3	1.5	1.6	1.8
Neuralgia, neuritis, sciatica (87b).....	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.0	2.2	2.1	2.6
Other diseases of nervous system (80-85, 87, except part of 84d and 87b).....	1.9	2.3	2.1	2.4	2.0	2.3	1.8
Diseases of heart and arteries, and nephritis (90-99, 102, 130-132).....	7.6	8.8	8.6	8.6	8.1	8.7	7.7
Other genitourinary diseases (133-138).....	4.7	4.6	4.9	4.0	4.8	4.3	3.3
Diseases of skin (151-153).....	3.3	3.2	3.3	2.8	3.3	3.0	3.2
Diseases of organs of movement except diseases of joints (156b).....	3.1	3.4	3.6	3.0	3.3	3.2	3.2
All other diseases (45-57, 60-79, 88, 89, 100, 101, 103, 154, 155, 156a, 157, 162).....	14.6	14.6	13.8	12.6	14.2	13.6	11.9
Ill-defined and unknown causes (200)	3.3	4.2	3.2	3.5	3.2	3.8	3.6
Average number of males.....	168, 458	154, 133	166, 718	159, 154	167, 588	156, 644	945, 365

¹ Industrial injuries and venereal diseases are not included. ² Numbers in parentheses are disease title numbers from International List of Causes of Death, 1939. ³ Exclusive of influenza and grippe, respiratory tuberculosis, and venereal diseases.